

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #1400/01 3290923
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 250923Z NOV 09
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2813
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 9540
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0937

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 001400

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/P, EAP/PD - THOMAS HAMM
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ASIA TRIP,
U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage November 25 on AIT Chairman Raymond Burghardt's visit in Taiwan; on Premier Wu Den-yih's interview with several major Taiwan papers; and on the year-end city mayors' and county magistrates' elections around the island. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" ran a banner headline on page two, reading "Burghardt: [When Speaking of] Respect for China's Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity, the United States is Referring to Tibet and Xinjiang." The pro-unification "United Daily News" ran a banner headline on page ten, reading "Taiwan-U.S. TIFA [Talks]; Burghardt: Will Be Held Next Month." The KMT-leaning "China Times" also ran a banner headline on page five, reading "[AIT Director] William Stanton: TIFA Talks to Be Resumed in Taipei Early Next Year."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" discussed U.S. President Barack Obama's recent trip to Asia, saying Obama's yielding and catering to China will definitely be a warning signal for Asian countries. A "Liberty Times" analysis discussed AIT Chairman Burghardt's meeting with President Ma Ying-jeou and lambasted Ma for having acted too submissively to the United States. An "Apple Daily" editorial said Ma has failed to seize the opportunity to strongly protest to Burghardt, so that the latter would feel the pressure and convey Taiwan's messages to Washington. A separate "Apple Daily" column refuted Burghardt's remarks on U.S. beef in Taiwan and said when it comes to the interests of the Taiwan people, it is definitely a "real issue." An editorial and a column in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" both welcomed the "partnership" between the United States and China, saying that what Obama did was just "acknowledging a 21st century reality." End summary.

¶3. President Obama's Asia Trip

"The Empire Is Digging Its Own Grave While Small Countries Are Putting on a False Show of Peace"

James Tu, the publisher of "Apple Daily," wrote in his column in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 540,000]:

"[President] Obama's maiden tour to Asia has failed to achieve the results he had anticipated. His tight eight-day schedule did not bring ease or peace but rather doubts to Asian nations. Didn't [Singapore's] Lee Kuan Yew say that Asian nations need the United States to counterbalance an increasingly powerful China? But when in China, Obama was accommodating and flattered Beijing the whole time, to an extent that he had almost lost the dignity expected of the leader of a hegemonic power. ...

"Obama may be a new hand in terms of diplomacy, but his team in charge of national security and foreign relations is composed of elites specializing in Asian affairs. Now that the itinerary that these elites have carefully arranged has, unexpectedly, resulted in making the United States and its president lose face, one cannot but call it a major setback. But on top of the many apparent concession

s [the United States has made to China], Obama's yielding and catering to China is definitely a warning signal for Asian countries. ...

"The visit by India's Prime Minister to the United States this time provided a good opportunity to test the United States' strategic intent for Asia. If Washington fails to adjust its [Asian] policy in a timely way, its leadership [in the region] will certainly decline, and the power structure in Asia will thereby face a restructuring. Some countries will feel compelled to kowtow to China, while others will naturally try to seek a way out or to form an alliance to resist China. Such a development will surely generate irreparable damage to the stability in Asia and to the United States' prestige. ..."

14. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

A) "Ma-Burghardt Meeting -- Scolding People on the Main Streets while Apologizing to Them in the Alleys?"

Deputy Editor-in-Chief Tsou Jiing-wen noted in an analysis in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 680,000] (11/25):

"[President] Ma Ying-jeou received [AIT Chairman] Raymond Burghardt Tuesday, who offered some explanations with regard to the content of the joint statement inked during [President] Obama's trip to China. The Presidential Office, in return, issued a press release about the call of this [U.S.] envoy. In contrast to the open remarks made during the press conference jointly held by Obama and [Chinese President] Hu Jintao and the written joint statement, the United States' way of handling [Taiwan] was no different than 'scolding people on the main streets while making apologies in the alleys.' What's more humiliating was that Ma, as the representative of our U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

country, went so far as to praise [his meeting with Burghardt] by calling it 'the smoothest one in many years in which Taiwan was able to get the most extensive information [about Obama's trip to China].' [Ma's] showing great forbearance in putting up with such an insult was extremely inappropriate. ...

"It has almost become a routine that [Washington] will send someone to Taiwan just to placate the island after a U.S. president has visited China and made some remarks. What is at stake is the attitude Taiwan uses in expressing its position [to Washington]. When compared with his predecessors, no one has been as servile as Ma, who sees China as his close relative and the United States as his adoptive father, as if it would kill him if he has to act neither arrogantly nor submissively. At the end of the Ma-Burghardt meeting, the U.S. envoy gave no certain answers to any of the wishes that Taiwan desires -- a development indicating that [Burghardt] only has limited authority. But when it comes to U.S. beef issue, [Burghardt] gave very clear and precise orders of 'not to touch the [U.S.-Taiwan] protocol'. One cannot help but wonder what the real purpose of Burghardt's visit this time is. ...

"If [Taiwan] wants the United States to do something to make up for the harm it did in creating imbalance [across the Taiwan Strait], it cannot just settle for having a small chat with Burghardt in the Presidential Office. The U.S. government must find an opportunity to state its position openly to the international community. Why couldn't the statement that 'the United States has never taken a position on Taiwan's political status' have been announced in Washington? As for the [U.S.] 'commitment to help maintain Taiwan's self-defense capabilities,' why not carry it out by quickly approving the sale of F16 C/D fighter jets [to Taiwan]? What Taiwan people want is something substantive for Taiwan, and not just granting or saving face for politicians. Ma is extremely disgraced by expressing 'sincere gratitude' to Burghardt!"

B) "Ma Ying-jeou Is Not as Good as Tsai Ying-wen"

The mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 540,000] editorialized (11/25):

"Obama's Asia trip has exposed his weakness and that of his foreign relations team; [his trip] has not only aroused grave concerns from Taiwan but has also annoyed India. Except for China, which has

reaped a bumper harvest, all the other countries throughout East Asia and Southeast Asia were very confused. ... AIT Chairman Raymond Burghardt arrived in Taiwan Sunday to brief Taiwan on the Obama-Hu meeting, saying things such as 'the United States has not abandoned the 'Taiwan Relations Act' (TRA) and that its Taiwan policy remains intact. This is a routine procedure of the U.S. State Department. The Taiwan government should seize this opportunity to protest strongly to Burghardt in a righteous and stern manner; it would be reasonable even if it had to behave in an exaggerated way, because only by doing so can Burghardt feel the pressure and thereby seriously convey [Taiwan's] messages to Obama and his team.

"What was disappointing is that President Ma did not seem to have noticed the harm the Obama-Hu 'joint statement' has done to Taiwan; neither has he noticed the clever wording of linking Taiwan implicitly with the pledge in the statement to 'respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity,' which will weaken the power of the United States' protection of Taiwan under the TRA in the future. ...

"Burghardt called [the controversy over the import of U.S. beef] a phony issue in Taiwan. Former Peoples' Liberation Army Lieutenant-General Li Jijun also said during a [recent] meeting in Taiwan that the [Chinese] missiles targeting Taiwan are a 'phony issue.' How can it be a phony issue when we are asked to eat toxic U.S. beef? [Should the answer be yes], then is anti-terrorism a phony issue as well? Are the missiles targeting Taiwan a phony issue? Then independence for Tibet and Xinjiang is also a phony issue. If Ma fails to stand up firm, anyone can say that the safety and security of the Taiwan people is a phony issue. If so, the president will be a phony president as well."

C) "A Real [Issue] Indeed"

The "Spicy Apple" column in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 540,000] wrote (11/25):

"AIT Chairman Raymond Burghardt came to Taiwan to brief the island on [U.S. President] Obama's China visit. He believes that the controversy in Taiwan over the U.S. beef is a 'phony issue' and a political issue 'because the elections are looming.' These remarks do not sound right, nor are they the appropriate rhetoric one would expect of a diplomat, because when it comes to the interests of the Taiwan people, their health is definitely a real issue. Burghardt U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

cited examples of the Americans, saying that they all let their children and grandchildren eat U.S. beef. 'No one is concerned, and there is no controversy in the United States.' As a matter of fact, the Taiwan people are not against U.S. beef, but the beef offal and ground beef that have high risks to one's health. This is definitely a real issue. ..."

D) "Some Perspective Needed for U.S. on Fears about China"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (11/25):

"... For starters, the perceived new tone adopted by President Obama is the wiser diplomatic approach for America to take with all its allies as well as trading partners. Walking softly while keeping a big stick available -- but carefully out of sight -- is the only way America can continue being a major influence in the world, despite the waning of some of its power. Secondly, those who worry about America's debt to China are right to be concerned, but the situation does not portend a seismic shift just yet. Bear in mind that China is not even America's largest lender. That would be Japan, which has loaned the U.S. almost US\$590 billion. The fact that China provides so much credit to the U.S. means the People's Republic has a vested interest in maintaining stability. Pulling the rug out from America might satisfy some rabid Chinese nationalists but would be detrimental to the majority of Chinese. China's leaders are not from the Kim Jong-il School of Economics. China's savvy leadership understands the uniquely symbolic relationship between U.S. consumers and Chinese producers. When U.S. presidents and politicians tell their people that China is not a strategic threat to America, some of their citizens chalk the sentiment up to global

niceties. When their leaders say that China is America's partner, some Americans roll their eyes in disbelief. To these Americans, China is simply a competitor -- a massively powerful competitor that doesn't necessarily follow the rules of the game. ...

"... To be sure, the PRC is a major world player. We all know the superlatives: largest population, biggest army and so on. But china is unlikely to genuinely surpass America anytime soon. ... China's millions of poor will require decades of slow progress before China can truly emerge as a real international player. China's delicate dance of trade relations with the U.S. and the world is its ticket to a brighter future. By the same token, America's best chance of maintaining its dominance is by working with China. America and China must act as two pistons of the same engine that drives the global economy forward. When President Obama says China and America are partners, he isn't engaging in political new-speak, he's just acknowledging a 21st century reality."

E) "Shift in Power after Obama Visit"

Columnist Frank Ching noted in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] (11/25):

"Observers analyzing the visit of U.S. President Barack Obama to China, not surprisingly, looked for signs of a shift in the world balance of power -- and they found them. ... Of course, the shift in the balance of power does not mean that china is going to replace the United States as a global hegemon. It does mean, however, that China will play a much bigger role in world affairs. ...

"So what we have now is a framework for a bilateral relationship in which each sees the other as a partner. What remain is now is to build political trust, which is clearly still lacking. While both countries say that they are committed to building a positive, cooperative and comprehensive relationship for the 21st century, old problems such as Taiwan, Tibet and human rights are as intractable as ever while new problems are bound to emerge. It will not be easy for this new partnership to work. But if it doesn't, then the outlook for the resolution of world issues in the 21st century will be bleak."

STANTON